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ABSTRACT

This study reports on the results of polling three juries representing a cross section of authorities, supervisors, and outstanding teachers in English to identify desirable concepts and competencies which should be included in an English methods course for prospective secondary school teachers. Data for this study were obtained from a questionnaire/rating scale sent to the three groups of educators. Three tables were set up from the analyzed data. Table 1 presents 56 combined groupings of concepts and competencies in rank order. The most important of all the concepts and competencies was "Gains ability in guiding critical thinking, speaking, writing, and listening." The remaining five are as follows: "Gains ability in varied approaches to literature and composition"; "Understands personal and class objectives"; "Gains ability in motivating students through a variety of means"; "Understands the value of unit planning"; and "Understands sources of and uses of materials and aids, library and mass media." Table 2 summarizes the opinions of jurors regarding the competency of teachers of English and of their present preparatory programs. Table 3 lists areas designated by jurors that need greater emphasis in teacher programs (history and nature of language ranking first). (JA)

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TEACHING THE ENGLISH TEACHER

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Teaching the English Teacher

Spurred by the population explosion as well as the current thrust to translate course hours into performances or competencies, institutions concerned with the preparation of teachers have echoed Spencer's question of "What knowledge is the most worth?" in making eclectic selections of content for today's courses of study that must teach more to a greater number of students in the same amount of time. In the field of English, the search for a proper balance of content in college programs for preparing the teacher of English has been spotlighted by the important study, the English Teacher Preparation Study. Two great concerns, content and methodology, meet in the senior-level course in the methods of teaching English, since the competencies teachers need to develop learning in students as well as knowledge of the content they are to teach are both generally involved in this particular course. Interest in determining the specifics that should be included in this important course sparked an investigation which involved a polling of three "juries" representing a cross section of authorities in the fields of English and professional education, English coordinators and supervisors, and outstanding English teachers on the secondary level. The problem was to identify desirable concepts and competencies which should be included in an English methods course for prospective secondary school teachers. Data for this study were obtained from a questionnaire-rating scale sent to the three groups of educators.

Panelists

The roster of respondents to the survey reads like a roll call of honor among leaders and policy makers in the fields of the communicative arts and education. These juries of thinkers and leading educators, reflecting their combined 2328 years of experience and observation, responded graciously and ranked the list of concepts and competencies.

Jury I, with a combined 811 years of experience, was composed of the following authorities: Dwight Burton, John J. DeBoer, John S. Diekhoff, J. N. Hook, Arno Jewett, Albert Kitzhaber, Herbert Klausmeier, Albert Marckwardt, Constance McCullough, Joseph Mersand, James Miller, Robert C. Pooley, Floyd Rinker, James Sledd, Dora V. Smith, James R. Squire, George W. Stone, James Stone, Ruth Strang, Florence Stratemeyer, Marian Trabue, Arthur Traxler, Walter Waetjen, and Cornelia Varner.

Jury II, composed of top-level English coordinators or supervisors from 42 of the 50 states, reflected 904 years of experience. Jury III, composed on an outstanding English teacher selected from each of 39 states upon recommendation of the Chairman of the Department of English at each state university, tallied 613 years of experience. The total years of experience, although combining as few as five years with the wisdom of forty-five years, lent credence and influence to their decisions.

Data Analyzed

The survey instrument was composed of two sections. The first part grouped 56 concepts or competencies into areas of emphasis: (1) Fundamental Areas (concepts and competencies dealing with reading, writing, speaking, and listening), (2) Organization, (3) The Learner, (4) Image of the Teacher and the Profession, and (5) Evaluation. The second part, a General Summary section, contained questions pertinent to present programs of teacher preparation. Not to restrict the respondents too greatly, a blank was left for the addition of important inclusions that might have been overlooked or which might indicate a regional problem. The concepts in Section I were rated by encircling numbers with the following weights:

3 if it is very important
2 if it is often important
1 if it is seldom important
0 if it does NOT belong in the methods of teaching course but in some other subject matter course

The data obtained through the survey were treated statistically to obtain numerical ratings which could be interpreted objectively. A comparison of means and standard deviations of the ratings of Juries I, II, and III revealed the rankings given to the variables. Also, a summation of the returns of the three juries comprised a fourth group of means and standard deviations for a comparison of the individual jury's returns with the whole returns. Tables of rankings by the juries of the concepts under each of the five groups revealed the importance attached to the items by the three juries.

Findings

Combining the components of all the groups of Section I to identify a single list of concepts and competencies in rank order was the first objective of the study. (See Table I) From this list inclusions in college methods courses for teachers of English on a rank basis could be determined. No attempt was made to eliminate those entries with low scores; all were included. Neither was any attempt

Table 1

Rank Order of Combined Grouping of Concepts and Competencies

Rank	Concept or Competency	Mean
1.	Gains ability in guiding critical thinking, speaking, writing, and listening	2.790
2.5	Gains ability in varied approaches to literature and composition	2.781
2.5	Understands personal and class objectives—has overview of work	2.781
4.5	Understands means of planning sequential work that is logical to the students	2.743
4.5	Gains ability in motivating students through a variety of means	2.743
6.	Understands value of unit and daily planning	2.733
7.	Understands sources of and use of materials and aids, library, mass media, and paperbacks	2.724
8.	Recognizes individual differences and methods of handling them	2.667
10.	Gains ability in methods such as discussion, question-answer, problem-solving, lecture, panel, debate, and reporting	2.600
10.	Gains ability in integration of four areas of language arts	2.600
10.	Exhibits competency and intellectual curiosity	2.600
12.	Exhibits approachability and interest in students and in work	2.581
13.5	Understands nature of creativity and ways to stimulate it	2.562
13.5	Uses objectives as basis for evaluative procedure	2.562
15.	Understands the value of using self-evaluative techniques for students and for self	2.552
16.	Understands the value of using teacher-made tests	2.524
17.5	Gains ability to detect and correct problems in reading, comprehension, and speech	2.467
17.5	Recognizes importance of proper learning environment	2.467
19.5	Gains ability in cultivating an aesthetic appreciation of literature	2.419
19.5	Gains ability in written and spoken language competencies	2.419
21.	Exhibits professional attitude	2.400
22.5	Gains ability in large group, small group, individual study procedures as well as techniques of grouping	2.362
22.5	Exhibits ethics with colleagues, school system, and students	2.362
24.	Understands control and discipline techniques	2.352
25.	Exhibits ability to assume responsibility and leadership	2.333
26.	Understands structuring experiences empirically for meaningful learning	2.324
27.	Recognizes achievement expectancies of age, grade level, and sex	2.314
28.5	Gains ability in use and relation of structural, historical, descriptive, and prescriptive linguistics	2.305
28.5	Exhibits pleasing personality and desirable character traits	2.305
30.	Understands the value of standards for marking papers	2.276
31.5	Understands the value of involving students in evaluation	2.267
31.5	Gains ability in understanding propriety of levels of usage	2.267
33.	Recognizes importance of combined goal setting of teacher and students	2.257
34.	Recognizes influence of reinforcement on retention of knowledge	2.248
35.	Recognizes psychological reactions for age levels	2.210
36.	Gains ability in relating ideas in reading to personal environment	2.200
37.	Understands mechanics of classroom procedure	2.162
38.	Exhibits pleasing personal appearance	2.124
39.	Understands the value of using records and recognizes need for security of them	2.114
40.	Gains ability to understand dignity and value of individual and of real self through a study of ideas of great thinkers	2.076
41.	Exhibits interest in national, state, and local organizations and affiliations	2.057
42.5	Understands the value of using approved procedures for reporting progress to parents	2.048
42.5	Gains ability in delineating changes in language	2.048
44.	Recognizes and uses learning processes (S-R, Association, etc.)	2.038
45.	Understands the value of using standardized tests	2.000
46.	Gains ability to recognize masterful methods of construction in fundamental areas (reading, writing, etc.)	1.981
47.	Gains ability in including mythology, Biblical allusions, and folklore	1.943
48.	Understands the value of using approved procedures for keeping register, records, and forms	1.752
49.	Understands personnel and guidance services available	1.743
50.	Understands and employs eclectic approach to research	1.733
51.5	Exhibits understanding of place of extracurricular activities	1.714
51.5	Understands graded, non-graded, block, and core programs	1.714
53.	Gains ability in use of programmed learning materials and teaching machines	1.619
54.	Exhibits interest in community participation	1.514
55.	Understands school law and local school policy	1.438
56.	Exhibits understanding of teacher welfare inclusions	1.352

made to establish how many of the highest ranking items should be included in the course under study for two reasons: (1) colleges vary in the credit given, both in hours and/or in credit/non-credit, and (2) the amount of material included in a course varies with the ability of the class and with the finesse of the instructor; therefore, the list is given in descending order of importance as gauged by the aggregate means of the three juries.

The most important of all the concepts and competencies was identified by the jurors as Gains ability in guiding critical thinking, speaking, writing, and listening. This rating reflects the complex needs of today's fast-changing society and societal problems. It also points to the general necessity of teaching concepts and techniques of learning in preference to teaching facts only.

The need of using a variety of approaches to motivate America's youth of many ethnic backgrounds was recognized by the rating of Gains ability in varied approaches to literature and composition as the second most important inclusion of the entire list. The need for direction and order in the structuring of content was revealed through the selection of Understands personal and class objectives - has overview of work as third in importance. This understanding entails seeing the sequence of the English course in its place in the experience of the student as well as seeing its relationship to other subjects being studied, to the work previously accomplished, and to the work lying ahead. The teacher's objectives build empirically in knowledge and skills gained previously and reinforce and build for future understandings. Actually, the next three selections are also closely interwoven in the fabric of learning: Gains ability in motivating students through a variety of means; Understands the value of unit planning; and Understands sources of and uses of materials and aids, library, and mass media.

Table 2 summarizes the opinions of jurors regarding the competency of teachers of English and of their present preparatory programs. This information was gained from questions asked in the General Summary section, Section II of the instrument.

The first obvious conclusion of all three juries was that present English and professional education courses are not meeting the needs of teachers. Certainly an evaluation of our preparatory program is mandatory. Perhaps the third question reveals one clue for the inadequacy; perhaps students are being admitted to the teaching program when their academic background in the first two years of college is not satisfactory to qualify them for teaching or their primary interest is not working with young people.

Table 2

Opinions of Jurors Regarding Competency of Teachers and of Their Preparation Programs

Question	Jury I			Jury II			Jury III		
	Yes	No	Yes and No	Yes	No	Yes and No	Yes	No	Yes and No
1. Are present English courses meeting the needs of teachers?	3	15	6	4	36	2	7	28	4
2. Are present professional education courses meeting the needs of teachers?	2	14	8	5	34	3	4	33	2
3. Would you advocate a proficiency test in English before gaining eligibility for methods?	14	10	0	30	11	1	34	4	1
4. If methods course is taught by Department of English, should instructor be required to have credit hours in psychology, methodology, and education?	21	3	0	36	6	0	34	5	0
5. Do you recommend five years of college training for beginning teachers?	19	5	0	25	17[a]	0	27	12	0
6. Do teachers fail more frequently from lack of classroom control than from lack of academic preparation?	13	11	0	26	14	2	18	17	4
7. Do you prefer (a) pre-planned, sequential course, (b) needs as they arise from themes, (c) combination of (a) and (b)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)
	6		18	9	1	32	3	1	35

[a]Four teachers and four coordinators qualified their responses and wrote that the fifth year should be one of at least half-time internship or of study after a year or two of experience had transpired.

A qualification deemed necessary in the teacher of these students who do qualify for the methods course is basic credit hours and demonstrated ability in the fields of psychology, methodology, and education. Most of the jurors appended a note to the effect that the college teacher who was to instruct secondary school teachers should have had experience in secondary schools and should hold a certificate himself.

Question 6 implied a confidence in the ability of English teachers to fill "gaps" in academics through their own study, but revealed that they needed more help in the techniques of classroom control and understanding of young people.

A large degree of flexibility in teacher ability in curriculum planning and teaching was shown by the answers to question 7. Obviously, the three juries felt that the best teaching combined idealistic preplanning with the practical reality of ability levels of students.

One question, posed to summarize much of the feeling of the jurors stated, "What specific competencies should be stressed in college preparation more than they were stressed for your preparation?" Since these jurors are still actively engaged in curriculum planning or in teaching young teachers, it was felt that their answers would reveal needs of today as well as needs they had discovered when they began their teaching. A few exceptions were noted, however. Creativity received a low score (See Table 3), although it ranked relatively high on Table 1. It was anticipated that reading and methods of teaching reading would bring the greatest number of responses, considering the basic importance of the skill to school success and the underwriting of reading improvement courses by federal funds. Although better preparation in the teaching of reading was one of the three competencies mentioned most frequently, the need for teaching the history and nature of language received more comment than any other item, followed closely by the need for better preparation in the teaching of composition. A talley of the areas needing greater emphasis in preparation programs is shown in Table 3.

All three juries wished for more preparation in grammar(s), semantics, and rhetoric as well as in theories of learning and in unit and lesson planning according to behavioral objectives.

Table 3

Areas Designated by Jurors Which Need Greater Emphasis in the Teacher Preparation Program

Rank	Area	Jury I	Jury II	Jury III	Total
1.	History and nature of language	6	12	15	33
2.	Composition	2	12	17	31
3.	Reading	1	9	9	20
4.	Methodology	2	12	3	17
5.	Unit and lesson planning and org., objectives	3	3	8	14
6.	Grammars, semantics, rhetoric	3	5	5	13
7.	Linguistics	4	2	6	12
8.5	Adolescent lit. and modern lit.	2	3	4	9
8.5	Theories and psychology of learning	2	3	4	9
11.	Ways of working with culturally disadvantaged	1	4	3	8
11.	Ability levels and expectancies	3	2	3	8
11.	Motivation	2	2	4	8
14.	Humanizing instruction—individual diff.	2	2	3	7
14.	Explication and analysis of literature	1	4	2	7
14.	Mastery of subject matter	2	5	0	7
16.	Literary criticism	3	0	3	6
17.5	Use of mass media and materials	2	1	2	5
17.5	Speech and foreign language	2	0	3	5
19.5	Methodology in teaching genres	0	2	0	2
19.5	Curriculum dev. and patterns	0	2	0	2
21.5	English as second language	0	1	0	1
21.5	Creativity	0	1	0	1

A term relatively new to education circles since most of the jurors had graduated was "culturally disadvantaged." Several jurors from all three groups requested additional preparation in methodology for working with these students as well as work in the area of problems of the inner city schools. Closely allied with this need was the request for more information about literature for adolescents and for multi-ethnic cultures as well.

Conclusions

From the data obtained, the following conclusions seemed to be supported:

1. Since forty-five of the concepts had a mean score above 2.000, the usual three semester hour course in methodology seems not to be adequate for inculcating all the concepts and competencies identified by the study. With the individualized approach, consideration should be given to the approximate number of hours needed for attaining the required level of competency for each area of methodology or each group of performances. With the usual scheduling of methods courses in both an academic discipline and the professional education area, there is a greater opportunity to include the most important concepts and competencies; however, these courses should be carefully articulated to insure proper emphasis upon the skills identified in Table 1 as well as to prevent undesirable repetition.

2. The English methods course has been the recipient of too many "leftovers" from other course omissions. The course should be carefully outlined and structured within the confines of its own area, including the needs of teachers as shown in Table 3. It should build on concepts incorporated in related courses but should not repeat work relegated to other areas.

3. To reflect academic needs, the planning for the curriculum for teacher education should involve scholars in academic fields as well as in professional education.(Table 3)

4. The methods course should be taught by a person familiar with content in the field of English as well as competent in the field of professional education. The instructor should have had teaching experience at the secondary school level. (Table 2)

5. Careful selection of candidates for teaching on the basis of intelligence, scholarship, motivation, personality, and aptitude for teaching should be

encouraged. Candidates of mediocre or limited ability should not be allowed to enter the field, and they should be discovered before they are allowed to enroll in the methods class. (Table2)*

6. There is a need for sequence and articulation in communicative arts from kindergarten through college, coupled with regular inclusion of needs of individual students as they arise from their writing and reading assignments.

*NOTE: See Boze, Screening Points in Secondary Teacher Education Programs, a monograph published July, 1968. Copies may be obtained from writing to the author c/o The University of Houston at Clear Lake City, Houston, Texas 77058, as long as supplies are available. Also available in December,1969 copy of RIE, Research in Education.